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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Field representation of United Nations system organizations: a more unitary approach

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Field representation of United Nations system organizations: a more unitary approach" (JIU/REP/92/8).

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FIELD REPRESENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS: A MORE UNITARY APPROACH

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recent changes in the world political climate make it both possible and necessary to take a fresh look at United Nations system field representation. This report is intended as a contribution to current debate on restructuring and rationalization of the United Nations system. It should be considered in conjunction with parallel efforts such as the revitalization of ECOSOC, the ongoing debate on system "governance", proposals to reform the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and its subsidiary machinery.

In the author's view, the best that can be done at this stage is to set forth some basic options for the Secretary-General, his senior colleagues and intergovernmental bodies to consider. The suggested options constitute the basis for the report's recommendations, which are in two categories: (a) recommendations 1 and 2 for immediate implementation, and (b) recommendations 3 and 4 for the longer-term.

In these recommendations the Secretary-General, the Executive Heads of United Nations system organizations in the context of ACC, and the governing bodies concerned are accordingly invited to:

- consider enhancing the existing limited early warning capability (Option A, paragraphs 28-33 of the report);

- study proposals for more structured early warning/political functions in the context of a unitary United Nations Office (Option B, paragraphs 34-35) and prepare a report on the feasibility and possible timetable for its implementation;

- consider a proposal for establishing a post of the United Nations Representative (Option C, paragraphs 38-49); and finally

- take steps to modify the procedure for selection and appointment of the Resident Co-ordinators (paragraphs 32-33).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Reasons for this study Issues relating to the structure and evolution of field representation of organizations of the United Nations system have been of regular and increasing concern to the Joint Inspection Unit. Several reports over the years 1/ have documented the growth of United Nations' field presence and have advocated a more rational and coherent - if not leaner - approach in terms of programmes, structures and facilities (e.g. specific criteria to be applied for the opening of new offices and assessing their continuing need, common premises, pooling of financial and telecommunications facilities, shared use of vehicles, etc.). By and large, although many of the Unit's recommendations were either supported or formally approved, the political will and organizational muscle for their full implementation were lacking. The JIU - and others propounding similar themes, in particular the Nordic countries - appeared to be preaching in the desert: the objective conditions for reform were just not there.

2. Change or marginalization In the last couple of years things have changed dramatically. In the words of the Secretary-General, the United Nations is facing "new and unprecedented challenges and opportunities". The increasing demands which in all fields are being put to the Organization make change not only possible but necessary. The challenge is to respond effectively to increasingly complex problems in a rapidly evolving environment. The nature of the political, humanitarian and development emergencies that need to be tackled is such that unless the Organization demonstrates that it can adapt conceptually and operationally to the challenges, it runs the risk of becoming marginalized.

3. Convergence for change Fortunately there seems to be an increasingly broad consensus on the need for change. The specifics are still unclear but the direction is getting clearer. The most recent demonstration of this has been the summer 1992 session of ECOSOC and of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly where a wealth of innovative ideas and proposals have been put forward on the revitalization of the economic and social role of the Organization in general and on ways to improve the coherence and effectiveness of its operational activities in particular. A similar climate was perceptible in the recent debates at the UNDP and UNICEF governing bodies. There also seems to be a growing perception in the international community that the new agenda for the United Nations - peacemaking and peace-building, the focus on

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1/ In particular the following JIU reports: "Role of experts in Development Co-operation" (JIU/REP/78/4); "Field Offices of UNDP" (JIU/REP/83/4); "Field Representation of Organizations of the United Nations System: Structure and Co-ordination" (JIU/REP/86/1).

humanitarian assistance, the renewed momentum on the environment - will entail consolidation and restructuring both in the centre and in the periphery of the United Nations system. The present JIU study should be seen as a modest contribution to this ongoing debate on ways and means of making the Organization more effective and more responsive to the challenges ahead. The Inspector wishes to stress that while some of his suggestions could be implemented immediately at little or no cost, others are more far-reaching and their formulation is of a preliminary nature: they are advanced with the objective of stimulating a constructive debate rather than as ready-made solutions. Hopefully, the recommendations put forward in the following pages will be seen in this spirit.

4. Topic and scope This report deals with two separate but related issues:

- The implications of the changes in the world political climate on United Nations system activities in the field, i.e. in a situation where it is more and more apparent that the various United Nations spheres of activity, which had hitherto functioned by and large in an unrelated manner, should now be seen as parts of an integrated continuum ranging from political, human rights and humanitarian activities to the traditional development assistance and co-operation activities around which United Nations field representation has developed.

- The opportunity that this new climate provides to take a fresh look at the structure of United Nations system field representation and at the possible measures that could be taken to enhance its overall coherence and effectiveness.

5. Early warning In addition it should be mentioned that this study is to some extent related to the JIU report on the co-ordination of activities related to early warning of possible refugee flows (JIU/REP/90/2) which was generally well-received by the General Assembly as well as the United Nations organizations concerned and their governing bodies. The issue of the increased responsiveness of the United Nations system in the field to emerging crises, whether political, humanitarian or environmental, is a natural complement to an analysis of the structural and co-ordination aspects of field representation.

6. Linkages Obviously, the changes proposed in this report should be viewed in conjunction with the parallel efforts that are shaping up elsewhere in the United Nations system: revitalization of ECOSOC, ongoing debate on "governance", proposals to reform the ACC and its subsidiary machinery, etc. Some of the recommendations contained in this report could at least in part be implemented in isolation. However, full implementation is predicated on the introduction of wider reforms which have already been initiated by the Secretary-General or are currently being discussed by Member States and which are beyond the scope of this report.

7. The Inspector wishes to thank all those who have helped him in the preparation of this study and in particular the many organizations that provided detailed and thoughtful comments on his draft report. While he was not always able to fully accommodate these comments, the Inspector expresses his appreciation for the effort that went into their preparation. This will no doubt have helped to clarify the various points of view on the issues dealt with in this report, the main objective of which, as stated above, is to provide a few additional inputs to an important debate on the quest for a more effective and responsive structure of United Nations field representation.

II. THE PROBLEM

8. Until recently the global world situation and the rules of the game in international relations did not allow for and often did not require a strong political role for the United Nations at the field level. In a world political situation characterized by stalemate or confrontation there was little incentive in pursuing such an option. United Nations political activities were kept separate from the traditional operational activities of the system (technical co-operation, humanitarian relief, etc.). Peace-keeping and the other limited proactive political activities entrusted to the United Nations mainly took place through special mechanisms, e.g. special envoys or representatives, and with lines of responsibility in the Office of the Secretary-General, in the Department of Political Affairs, and the Field Operations Division which had little conceptual and operational contact with the United Nations development system.

9. The United Nations development system has been described as "a non-system" lacking a "central brain" where fragmentation and lack of co-ordination have created an "administrative jungle" 2/. Structurally a "system" in which separate entities are governed by separate intergovernmental bodies with delegates reporting to different line ministries does not in itself encourage co-ordination whether at the centre or at the periphery or indeed within the structures of donor and recipient governments themselves, whose representatives often do not speak with one voice.

10. The field representation of the organizations of the United Nations system, therefore, largely developed over the years in a haphazard and incremental manner responding to new needs as they emerged, rather than according to a rational plan. Given the deep roots of the United Nations system in functionalist theory, the state of North-South and East-West relations and the primacy of rhetoric and ideology in the mainstream United Nations political fora, this was perhaps inevitable. The result has been, on the one hand, that the so-called "baronies" have developed both at Headquarters and in the field according to criteria and priorities developed by their own governing bodies, often with little consideration for decisions taken by the governing bodies of sister organizations. On the other hand, "operational activities for development", through which a particular cluster of states voluntarily finance assistance activities in another cluster of states, have become the centrepiece of a system which has developed in complete separateness from the statutory activities under "assessed contributions". These voluntary contributions to the main United Nations funds and programmes have been to a large extent

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2/ Sir Robert Jackson, A Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System, document DP/5, 1969.

responsible for the growth of a complex structure comprising a large bureaucracy at Headquarters, hundreds of offices and a vast army of country representatives, experts and counterparts in the field. The conceptual and statutory implications of the growth of this structure based on voluntary funds have largely gone unnoticed. Concern has, however, often been expressed that extrabudgetary resources exceed assessed contributions by a substantial margin thereby creating the possibilities of distortions in the orientation and priorities of UN organizations' activities as set by their legislative organs 3/.

11. The point that a conductor to co-ordinate United Nations activities in the field was sorely needed has been repeatedly made inter alia in JIU reports, the above-mentioned Capacity Study and many internal and external studies. This has not made the issue less intractable. Indeed recent studies 4/, have shown convincingly that country and regional offices of the United Nations development system have mushroomed over the years in an unco-ordinated way and that there is much less "unity" now than, say, 25 years ago when many agencies which have since become "independent" were represented in the field through advisers to the UNDP Resident Representative rather than separate offices. Calls for rationalization and streamlining have often remained unheard.

12. Annex I provides some statistical information on the evolution of field representation. Suffice it to say that the number of separate field offices of United Nations system organizations in developing countries has grown from 485 in 1973 to 815 in 1992 (i.e. by approximately 70 per cent), while the international professional staff in these offices has grown from 2,092 in 1973 to 3,833 in 1989 (or an increase of 83 per cent). A closer look at the figures also shows that with a few exceptions, the field representation of the specialized agencies has not increased significantly during the last 10 years. It is offices of the various funds and programmes which are part of the United Nations itself that account for most of the increase (in particular UNHCR, UNICEF and UNFPA, while UNDP and WFP have remained relatively stable). This reinforces the impression that any attempt to rationalize and "unify" field representation should address itself in the first instance to the United Nations. Experience also shows that it is these United Nations bodies which are often the source or the object

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3/ On this point see the JIU report on "Extrabudgetary resources of the United Nations" (JIU/REP/90/3).

4/ The information contained in the 1986 JIU report on field representation (JIU/REP/86/1) has been updated to 1990 in the Secretary-General's report on Operational activities for development (document A/46/206, Add.3) and further updated to 1992 by CCSQ/OPS in document ACC/1992/OP/CRP.11.

of territorial and co-ordination problems in the field, the mandates of the specialized agencies being, generally speaking, more clearcut and less of a potential source of friction.

13. In addition, it should be noted that the increases in offices and international staff highlighted above have taken place at a time when increasing and more direct responsibilities for operational activities for development were to have been entrusted to governments through national execution. Should the trend towards national execution be amplified in the coming years, and there are indications that the new arrangements for programme support costs are having this effect, it is likely to have substantial implications on the staffing levels of UNDP field offices. This issue will need to be kept under careful scrutiny in the years ahead.

14. The system was not conceived as a unitary one; governing bodies, secretariats and the vast constituencies of experts and recipients all had vested interests in encouraging offshoots and breakaway programmes. Resistance to attempts at making the system more rational and coherent have been formidable and what changes have taken place have been more of form than substance. Just to give two examples:-

- The 1977 "restructuring" efforts which led to the establishment of Resident Co-ordinators in the field did not significantly change the nature of "co-ordination" on the ground.

- The 1986 JIU report recommended putting a "stay" on the opening of new field offices of UN system organizations until precise criteria for the establishment of such offices were accepted and adhered to.

15. Given the nature of the system where organizations and programmes are jealous of their mandates and of their separate sources of funding, it was easy for organizations which so wished to find the motives and backing to resist co-ordination. Co-ordination where it has occurred - and it does often occur - has been more the result of a happy combination of personalities than of institutional necessity. It must be recognized, however, that the intractability of the problem partly stems from the fact that the establishment of new offices is normally agreed by the respective governing bodies of the various United Nations organizations as well as by the host country concerned. who will look at the opening of new offices from the point of view of its own development priorities.

16. The Inspector does not wish to imply that he is advocating co-ordination for the sake of co-ordination nor increasing the centralization of an already over-centralized system. He is fully aware that agencies and programmes have specific mandates to carry out and that much is already being done effectively to resolve territorial or programmatic issues and to encourage synergy between agencies at Headquarters and in the field in

the furtherance of specific goals. The work of the various inter-agency mechanisms, such as the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCPG) and the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (CCSQ/OPS) deserve to be recognized. The latter committee has recently agreed on an important set of guidelines for the development of a "UN country strategy" which would, under the leadership of the Resident Co-ordinator, serve as the basis of the programme preparation processes of the respective United Nations organizations.

17. Increased coherence and teamwork at the country level are obviously welcome and so is the decentralization of the programming process to the field level. However, reform is on the agenda again and the expectation is that more should and can be done. The underlying thrust of this report is that the outside world has changed to such an extent that change can no longer be resisted. The combination of various factors - the improved international climate, a new Secretary-General, the renewed interest in and ever increasing demands on the Organization, the persisting financial difficulties which impede the rational long-term planning of activities - affords an historical opportunity for serious and meaningful reform of the United Nations system in general and of the structure of field representation in particular. The perceptions in the minds of the public, donors and the media of what the United Nations should do in the changed world context are an additional stimulus for reform. Expectations are high and resources at an all time low. It seems clear, therefore, that change will have to happen by and large within existing, if not contracting, resources.

18. In the past, the various categories of United Nations activity (development, humanitarian, human rights, political) have traditionally been kept separate. The existing structure of field representation was functional to this separation in watertight compartments. The situation has now changed: it is now increasingly difficult to separate development activities from humanitarian or human rights considerations or to avoid taking into account the political context in which such activities take place. Situations which arose only ten years ago where the UNDP representative could still turn a blind eye to human rights violations in the interest of the development activities in a given country, are totally inconceivable today. Public opinion and the donor community no longer accept the de-linking of development co-operation from political/human rights considerations. As we are seeing in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Cambodia, etc., it is likely that the United Nations will be called upon increasingly to intervene in complex situations in which there will be a mix of political, humanitarian, development, and human rights concerns if not a direct combination of military and humanitarian operations.

19. The time may therefore be ripe to consider how United Nations system field representation should be reformed to take this evolution into account. The establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the appointment of a

Super Co-ordinator are first steps in this direction. The reform and streamlining of UNICs now brought in all cases under the Resident Co-ordinators is another. The setting-up of "UN Offices" rather than disparate agency representations in the republics of the former USSR is also a hopeful sign. More steps will, however, need to be taken if United Nations representation is to become more effective and more in line with the new spirit of the times.

20. In particular, steps should be taken to increase the system's capacity to provide early warning, rapid situation assessment and quick response services in the context of humanitarian and other emergencies. Analysis of available information on emerging issues, potential crises and political developments in the host country are essential parts of early warning. At present Resident Co-ordinators are not specifically mandated to undertake such functions, although it is to be hoped that some political reporting to Headquarters on emerging issues does take place at the initiative of Resident Co-ordinators or at the request of Headquarters.

21. The problem is not so much one of mandates - if the Resident Co-ordinator wants to report, it is likely that he/she will do so and find a way of ensuring confidentiality - it is more one of priorities or more precisely of how the Resident Co-ordinators have internalized their own functions and their relationship with the host government. This relationship is basically one of trust: the Resident Co-ordinator is the honest broker. It is to him/her that the government is expected to turn for impartial advice. The Resident Co-ordinator is the facilitator in the development process. By training and inclination he/she is normally not keen to tread on political ground. Understandably, the Resident Co-ordinator may fear that the trust will vanish the moment he/she indulges in political reporting on sensitive developments in the country, especially if the Headquarters procedures to ensure confidentiality turn out to be leaky. Neither the Resident Co-ordinator as an individual nor UNDP as an institution is keen on becoming persona non grata.

22. Two distinct but interlinked problems need to be addressed. The first is unity in the field, i.e. how to bring United Nations Agency representatives under one flag, or under as few flags as possible. This applies mainly to the United Nations development and humanitarian system. The second is the widening of the United Nations role in the field in recognition of the new world context which commands a more active political role for the Organization in many situations.

23. Proposals for a more unitary United Nations representation in the field are already being circulated. The following are just a few examples:

(a) the Administrator of UNDP in his speech to the Governing Council on 8 May 1992 called for "a single UN country office under the authority of a single Resident Co-ordinator" appointed by and reporting directly to the Secretary-General and who would be "responsible for pulling together all threads of human development". This enhanced resident co-ordinator and his/her team would "design a single, coherent and integrated UN country programme". The proposal of the UNDP Administrator is limited to the programmes and funds falling more or less directly under the authority of the Secretary-General, i.e. UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UNDCP and "perhaps" UNHCR, as well as DHA. It would, however, be logical to assume that the specialized agencies should also be brought into the fold, perhaps at a later date.

(b) At the 1992 summer ECOSOC session, several Member States echoed this proposal and some even went as far as calling for the establishment of a "UN Ambassador". Similar themes were debated at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly and it is likely that these ideas will remain on the agenda in the months to come.

(c) The Secretary-General himself has clearly advocated a unified country presence in several statements and documents (excerpts of which are reproduced in Annex III):

- in the foreword to his report to the High Level segment of ECOSOC (A/1992/82/Add.1);

- in relation to activities in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (A/47/419/Add 3);

- and most recently in his statement to the General Assembly on the follow up to UNCED where he expressed his intention to, "... move quickly to a single United Nations presence that would encompass Programmes under my direct authority, including UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDCP and WFP. This combined operation would carry out an integrated strategy in each country where the Organization operates. It would be headed by a United Nations Representative, appointed by the Secretary-General, who would also be the Resident Co-ordinator for the United Nations system. ..."

- he has also made it clear that he regards this unified presence "as an essential part of the integrated approach to the political and socio-economic missions of the United Nations".

24. The above proposals, which, while differing on points of detail, contain the same thrust towards a more unitary and coherent system of field representation, necessary as they may be, have far-reaching implications for the institutional relationships between the various entities concerned since a unitary United Nations in the field would make little sense

without a unitary United Nations at Headquarters and without more unitary "governance" and funding mechanisms. These cannot be discussed in this short report. Suffice it to say that such changes would probably meet with considerable resistance in some United Nations quarters and that certain groups of countries may not necessarily support them.

25. Whatever the result of the interesting debate on "governance" and on the future institutional arrangements of the United Nations development system, these changes are likely to take time. Paradoxically, it may be easier to envisage change as far as United Nations political representation in the field is concerned, since there may be less opposition to the introduction of a new concept than to a transformation of existing systems. Given that the Organization is being asked to play a more proactive role in peace-making and preventive diplomacy, it is likely that the idea of the establishment of a limited network of officials performing political early warning functions in the field will impose itself as a prerequisite. This would just be a minor first step forward. Ideally, the long term goal should be to combine the reform of the United Nations development system and the reform of the United Nations political system into a unitary structure which would cater for all United Nations needs and functions in the field. As mentioned above, the experience of the last few years suggests that it is no longer possible to maintain artificial separations between the different categories of United Nations activity. Most of the crises and emergencies that the United Nations is confronted with present humanitarian/developmental as well as political aspects. Increasingly, the actors involved are armed factions or <u>de facto</u> forces and not Member States as such. In order to ensure impartiality and quick responses in complex and often confused situations, co-ordination and unitary leadership are absolute musts.

III. OPTIONS FOR REFORM

26. For the United Nations to maintain and increase its credibility it is now essential that the issues briefly outlined above be addressed. Given their complex and sensitive nature it may not be possible to address them all at once as part of a structured plan. If this is the case, a staged approach should be adopted. It would be feasible to start with simple and relatively low key measures which would not disrupt the relationship of mutual trust between United Nations representatives and host governments who are themselves much more sensitive than in the past to the linkages between development assistance and political/humanitarian considerations, and which would allow for some key political functions to be performed at the field level without, at least initially, revolutionizing the system.

27. The best that can be done at this stage is to set forth some basic options for the Secretary-General, his senior colleagues and intergovernmental bodies to consider. These options range from mere tinkering with existing structures and mechanisms in order to allow at least some political and early warning functions to take place at the field level to a completely new concept of field role for the United Nations.

28. The options briefly discussed below could be introduced in a sequence, with option C as the long term goal.

Option A: Limited early warning capability within existing structures:

The first and less threatening solution would be to build on what already exists: the Resident Co-ordinator. His/her functions could be enhanced by simple decision of the Secretary-General to include some political early warning responsibilities - in particular the preparation of regular or ad hoc reports on the security situation and on emerging political, humanitarian or human rights issues.

29. The existing structures of agency field representation would be left untouched for the time being but inter-agency field level co-ordination mechanisms should be strengthened. This applies primarily to the Security Management Team which is chaired by the Resident Co-ordinator and which could act as an early warning team, but also to the Disaster Management Team which is only normally activated in times of natural or other emergencies.

30. Under this option the Resident Co-ordinator would not normally be requested to undertake more formal political tasks which would continue to be handled, if required, by Special Envoys or Representatives of the Secretary-General. However, it may be useful to reaffirm the Resident Co-ordinator's responsibilities, as DHA/UNDRO representative, in the

co-ordination of humanitarian activities. In this connection the Inspector would like to recall the recommendations of the JIU report on the co-ordination of activities related to early warning of possible refugee flows (JIU/REP/90/2), and in particular Recommendation 1(e) which states that ACC should "make arrangements for United Nations Resident Co-ordinators to serve as co-ordination points for early warning of refugee flows in the field".

31. Indeed, whether Options B and C below are accepted or not, the Inspector would recommend that the Resident Co-ordinators' role in early warning - both in the field of refugee flows and in connection with emergencies of a political, humanitarian or environmental nature - should be unequivocally affirmed by the Secretary-General and ACC. In carrying out this function he/she would naturally draw on all locally available expertise and existing early warning systems (e.g. FAO's early warning reporting on food security).

32. In addition, the procedure for the selection and appointment of the Resident Co-ordinator should be modified in order to take into account his/her expanded mandate. It is therefore recommended that the selection of the Resident Co-ordinator should be the responsibility of a Committee chaired by the Secretary-General or his representative and composed of the Administrator of UNDP, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable Development, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management. The individual selected by the Committee would continue to be cleared with the Heads of the concerned agencies and, of course, the government of the country of assignment.

33. This option could be implemented immediately, after the concurrence of ACC, at no cost other than a few additional faxes and without altering the nature of the relationship between the United Nations and the host government authorities.

Option B: More structured early warning/political functions in the context of a unitary UN office.

34. If it is felt that bolder action can be taken in addition to Option A above, the mandate of the Resident Co-ordinator could be more extensively modified to include early warning and political reporting responsibilities. This would imply, in some cases, that political officers should be appointed to assist the Resident Co-ordinator, at least in countries e.g. Afghanistan, Somalia, etc., where the United Nations is likely to be called upon to play important political mediation functions. There would be cost implications, but it is assumed that the necessary resources could come from savings resulting from the fact that in most cases it would no longer be required to establish a separate office of "Secretary-General's representative" reporting to the Department of Political Affairs and that the consolidation of UNICs into the Resident Co-ordinators' offices would hopefully free some posts.

35. This should be combined, in order to strengthen the position of the Resident Co-ordinator vis à vis the host government, with the restructuring of the field representation of United Nations funds and programmes along the lines suggested by the Secretary-General (see Annex III).

36. The Resident Co-ordinator's functions, under this option, would need to be re-defined. The Secretary-General and ACC should agree and ensure that the Resident Co-ordinator becomes:

(a) The Secretary-General's representative and spokesperson in the country on all United Nations matters.

(b) The United Nations Co-ordinator for development assistance. In addition to being the formal representative for all development funds and programmes falling directly under the authority of the United Nations Secretary-General, the Resident Co-ordinator would be responsible for the preparation with the host government of an integrated programme strategy/country programme covering all United Nations system development activities and inputs. This could be done, initially, on the basis of the teamwork approach as approved by CCSQ(OPS), within the framework of existing mandates. This process would be greatly enhanced by further substantive decentralization of decision-making to the field level with a corresponding emphasis on maintaining clear lines of responsibility and direct accountability. Ideally, ways and means of further integrating the programming and operations of United Nations funds and programmes should be agreed upon, although it is to be recognized that this process will take time.

(c) The Co-ordinator for humanitarian assistance. The Resident Co-ordinator would become the representative of UNHCR and DHA/UNDRO (he/she is already the World Food Programme representative). and would continue to chair the Disaster Management team, which might more appropriately be re-named Humanitarian Emergency Management Team to make it clear that it covers all humanitarian natural and man-made emergencies (including the environment).

(d) The Co-ordinator for early warning and political reporting. He/she would continue to chair the Security Management Team (which might be re-named Security and Early Warning Team) and report on political, human rights, social and other emerging issues/crises as necessary to the Secretary-General. He/she would also become the channel for the Secretary-General to contact the government and engage in any political mediation and other functions as required and with additional staff resources as necessary. The practice of appointing resident Special Representatives of the Secretary-General should therefore normally be discontinued. The relationship between the enhanced Resident Co-ordinator and eventual Peacekeeping Operations would have to be determined on a case by case basis.

(e) The Director of the UNIC

37. The Inspector puts forward these ideas as practical suggestions of a set-up that might work, while recognizing that there may be other workable alternatives. The difficulties of establishing an integrated United Nations field structure as described above are certainly not under-estimated. He is well aware that on the one hand such changes cannot be introduced in isolation from a more integrated development structure at Headquarters, both in the concerned programmes and funds and in the governing bodies that oversee them; and that on the other hand, the relationships between the United Nations development, political and humanitarian entities and departments would need to be carefully studied and streamlined. Other variables, such as the changing roles and functions of the field offices of United Nations development organizations in the context of increasing national execution of projects, will also need to be carefully considered. In addition, the staffing and administrative arrangements for such a unitary office would need to be worked out in detail. A decision would be needed, in particular, on whether the position of Resident Co-ordinator should continue to be financed by UNDP or whether some type of cost-sharing agreement should be entered into by the concerned UN Funds and programmes. The Secretary-General could take the initiative of establishing a task force to study this.

Option C: The United Nations Representative

38. What follows is a much more far-reaching proposition, the costs and political benefits of which should be carefully assessed. It is presented as a contribution to the ongoing debate on how the United Nations system could be made more responsive to the challenges of the coming decades. It should be clear that the Inspector appreciates that views on the subject are not unanimous. Hopefully, discussion of the present proposal and of other similar suggestions will help in the elaboration of a solution acceptable to all concerned, whether UN organizations or Member States.

Background

39. At present the Resident Co-ordinator wears many hats and has several allegiances. As pointed out in the JIU report on field representation (JIU/REP/86/1) and in subsequent reports prepared by the former Office of the Director-General for International Economic Co-operation, the introduction of the Resident Co-ordinator has had mixed results and has not really brought about changes of substance in how United Nations system development activities are planned, implemented, evaluated and co-ordinated. In fact, in some cases it has made co-ordination more difficult, simply because it has focused attention on functions which were already de facto carried out by many Resident Representatives. The JIU report and other studies also highlighted the proliferation of field offices and the persistence or exacerbation of long-standing institutional problems such as who should "fly the flag" or who should "deliver the speech" on United Nations Day, not to mention more substantive problems of duplication, competition and programmatic co-ordination.

40. Past attempts to reform the United Nations development system - from the Jackson Capacity Study, to the "restructuring resolution" (32/197), "new dimensions", etc. - were predicated on the assumption of ever-increasing resources for United Nations development activities and on the central funding role of UNDP. This is manifestly no longer reality. On the one hand, UNDP in relative terms is competing with UNICEF, WFP and even the World Bank technical co-operation funds, and its central funding role is increasingly put into question. On the other hand, non-development operational activities - humanitarian - peacekeeping, election monitoring, are increasingly absorbing donor funds and attention. In many countries survival is marginalizing development. It may well be that this trend will continue.

41. In the present juncture, characterized by donor fatigue for development, ever-increasing demands for humanitarian and political field operations, financial crisis which rules out staff increases, etc., the time has come to tackle the question very bluntly: there will be no credible representation of global United Nations political and humanitarian concerns, there will be no substantive co-ordination of United Nations operational activities at the field level without the power to make decisions on the use of funds and without a direct link to, and corresponding support from, the Office of the Secretary-General. This power requires leadership. The present Resident Co-ordinator function carries no such leadership. This has to be changed. It is moreover obvious that no leadership or power of the purse will ever be conferred on the Resident Co-ordinator without a different climate, relationship, and structure between the various Headquarters of United Nations system organizations. Sir Robert Jackson noted as early as 1969 that the system had no "brain" and that "the whole machine had become unmanageable in the strictest sense of the word" and that it had become "slow" and "unwieldly like some prehistoric monster". Reform of agency relations in the field would, therefore, be meaningless without corresponding changes at Headquarters level, and similar changes in the internal decision-making structures of Member States to ensure that they speak with one voice in the various intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system.

42. Seen from the field, however, the problem appears to be relatively simple: there is a Resident Co-ordinator, his/her role and functions in the development sphere are more or less tolerated although he/she has less than adequate decision-making powers with respect to the utilization of United Nations system development funds. The Resident Co-ordinator has no specific political functions, and indeed he is often "doubled up" with a special political envoy who has different reporting lines. He/she is totally de-linked from peacekeeping operations (his role as Security Co-ordinator fades away into the background when peacekeeping operations are present). His/her role in humanitarian assistance co-ordination depends on the goodwill of the agencies which have the money and staff. He/she is sometimes seen as an impediment rather than as a facilitator.

43. What then should be done? How can the best possible use be made of scarce United Nations resources for operational activities and field representation?

44. If the current Resident Co-ordinator concept is not adapted to the challenges of a rapidly evolving global United Nations role, then what is the ideal solution? Upon reflection, the solution would be the single "United Nations Representative" 5/. Such an official would be the "depository of United Nations system policy" in the country of assignment, whether this is development, humanitarian, political or human rights policy. Considerable authority should be delegated to interpreting and advocating which particular variant of United Nations philosophy and practice is suited to the needs of the country. This assertive policy profile - in striking contrast with the prevalently passive role played today by United Nations agencies - would hopefully give the United Nations Representative, provided he is specifically trained and authorized to do so, sufficient clout both in discussing and agreeing with the government on the best possible mix of United Nations system inputs and their destination and in alerting the Secretary-General on impending emergency, political or human rights issues.

45. The ultimate aim should be the establishment of a single "United Nations Office" covering all United Nations system needs and activities. This Office would be headed by the "United Nations Representative" with the enhanced political profile outlined above. Much like in an Embassy, he/she should be assisted by a team comprising deputies and advisers according to the particular mix of needs and inputs to be provided in the country, e.g. Political Adviser, Deputy for Economic and Development Affairs (basically the old Resident Representative), Senior Agricultural Adviser (as was the case before the establishment of the FAO Representative), Co-ordinator for specific humanitarian activities (replacing the UNHCR and some functions of the UNICEF representatives). Health, Energy, Meteorology Advisers, etc., might also assist

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5/ The Inspector had considered various alternatives for this title. He had originally proposed "UN Ambassador" in recognition of the political functions that he/she would perform. The word "Ambassador" may, however, be a misnomer; the designation could just as well be "Delegate" (as the EEC representatives are called), "Chief of Mission", etc. It might be wise to move away from the term "Co-ordinator" to show that the position holds some executive in addition to co-ordination functions. Another alternative would be "United Nations High Commissioner" presiding over a "Commission" in which all United Nations agencies and funds/programmes would be represented. This would have the advantage of stressing the teamwork aspect of the United Nations system's involvement in the field, which is obviously essential.

the Representative depending on where the emphasis of United Nations activities falls in any particular period. It should be recognized that such advisers should come and go rather than come and stay. Some of these advisers might appropriately be given regional rather than country-specific responsibilities.

46. It should be clearly understood that the role of the Representative and his/her team is to advise the government on how to make the best possible use of the limited inputs and expertise available from United Nations system sources. Development policy, priorities and co-ordination are naturally prerogatives of the government. The role of the United Nations system should be to provide unbiased advice, taking into account the appropriate policy decisions taken by United Nations system intergovernmental bodies at the central level and, if and when there is a broad agreement on what can and should be done, to provide the required inputs that would "fit" into the government development strategy. United Nations system intervention need not be concentrated in government top priority sectors if these are adequately catered for by the government itself or by other sources of assistance. To take an extreme example, if the goverment priority no. 1 is self-sufficiency in agriculture, and if sufficient national or other resources are directed towards this goal, nothing should prevent the United Nations system from concentrating its resources on, say, telecommunications system development.

47. Particular attention should be given to the staffing of the Office, especially the choice of the "Representative". It would be a mistake to believe that current Resident Co-ordinators could ipso facto become "UN Representatives". By training and inclination most Resident Co-ordinators have little experience in political functions and diplomatic skills. A different kind of person will be required (not necessarily at a higher level) to perform this mix of representational, political, humanitarian and development functions. Training will be absolutely essential in order to develop a cadre of qualified staff who would serve in "United Nations Offices" and ultimately become Representatives.

48. Annex II of this report provides tentative terms of reference of the "United Nations Representative". Should the above proposal be of interest, the Joint Inspection Unit could, if requested, study the matter further and come up with more detailed information on possible reporting arrangements and linkages with the United Nations programmes and funds, as well as the specialized agencies.

49. Another issue that would need to be discussed is the relationship between the new structure of field representation suggested in Option C, and peacekeeping operations. Some streamlining would seem to be in order to ensure that peacekeeping and related operations initiated directly by the Security Council and the Department for Political Affairs do not get into the way of the political functions of the "Representative".

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Recommendations for immediate implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: Option A, as described in paragraphs 28-33 above, should be considered by the Secretary-General for immediate implementation. A letter should be sent by the Secretary-General to all Resident Co-ordinators outlining their "early warning responsibilities" and reaffirming their role as DHA/UNDRO representatives.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Selection of Resident Co-ordinators The Secretary-General should take immediate steps to modify, after concurrence of ACC, the procedures for selection and appointment of the Resident Co-ordinators. This should become the responsibility of a committee to be chaired by the Secretary-General or his representative and composed of the Administrator of UNDP, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable Development, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, one of the Under-Secretaries-General for Political Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management. The individual selected by the Committee would continue to be cleared with the Heads of the concerned agencies and, of course, the government of the country of assignment

B. Recommendations for the longer term

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Secretary-General should study the proposal for more structured early warning/political functions in the context of a unitary United Nations office (Option B) described in paras. 34-35 and report to ACC and the General Assembly on the feasibility and possible timetable for its implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Option C (paras. 38-49) is submitted for further consideration by the Executive Heads of United Nations system organizations in the context of ACC and by concerned governing bodies. Should such discussion be encouraging, the Secretary-General is requested to prepare a more detailed proposal for its implementation, taking into account the views of the concerned governing bodies of the specialized agencies. This task could be entrusted to an ad hoc time-limited ACC Working Group.

Field Representation from 1973 to 1992: Number of offices

A. Offices in and/or for developing countries

Organizations	Number of Offices			
	1973 1/	1983 2/	1990 2/	1992 2/
United Nations				
UNDP	87	112	110	115
UNHCR	12	48	70	89
UNFPA	23	31	53	59
UNICEF	29	43	75	75
UNEP		4	4	6
UNICs	35	47	49	53
WFP	73	82	82	87
ECA	5	7	5	6
ECLAC	7	7	6	6
ESCAP	1	2	1	1
ESCWA	-	1	-	-
UNDCP		3 3/	13 3/	17
Sub total	272	387	468	514
Other organizations				
ILO	26	27	28	28
FAO	52	64	78	78
WHO 4/	75	93	87	92
UNIDO	32	38	38	39
UNESCO	23	33	35	37
ICAO	5	6	6	7
ITU	-	0	11	12
WMO	-	2	2	2
UPU	-	-	-	6
Sub total	213	263	285	301
Total	485 1/	650	753	815

1/ Source: JIU/REP/86/1. The total appearing in the 1986 JIU report was 309. This is because, as explained in footnotes and 4 to Table 1 of that report, the representatives/advisers of WFP, UNFPA, UNIDO and FAO were not considered as separate "offices". These have, however, now been included in order to ensure consistency with the figures for subsequent years.

2/ The data are as reported in document ACC/1992/OP/CRP.1.

3/ These were UNFDAC offices which were integrated into the UN International Drug Abuse Control Programme (UNDCP) as of 1991.

4/ In 1973 and 1983 national co-ordinator offices in Africa have been counted as offices even when no staff has been indicated. Therefore, a comparison is risky.

B. Field representation for 1983 to 1989: number of staff

Orgs.	1983 Staff at non-HQ. offices Prof.	1983 Staff at non-HQ. offices G.S.	1989 Staff at non-HQ offices Prof.	1989 Staff at non-HQ offices G.S.
UNDP	615	4 005	1 031	3 837
UNHCR	220	723	330	1 089
UNICEF a/	703	1 409	1 169	2 033
ILO	141	256	121	269
FAO	234	655	238	748
UNESCO	216	301	223	331
WHO	401	1 216	493	1 487
ICAO	83	123	73	113
ITU	-	-	15	10
WMO	5	2	5	2
IMO	-	-	-	-
IAEA	-	-	-	-
UNIDO b/	84	88	135	101
TOTAL	2 702 c/	8 824	3 833	10 020

Source: The data are presented as they appear in document A/46/206/Add.3 - E/1991/93 Add.3. The information is based on the CCAQ Personnel statistics (Documents ACC/1984/PER/37 of 13 August 1984 and ACC/1990/PER/R.6 of 28 August 1990) except for UNIDO and UNICEF who supplied their own data. JIU attempted to update this table using the 1991 CCAQ Personnel statistics (ACC/1992/PER/R.22), but there would seem to be consistency problems, particularly with respect to the UNICEF data. The figures in the table should therefore be taken as orders of magnitude, rather than as a scientific head count. There is also an error in the column of GS staff for 1983: the total should add up to 8 778. The total is, however, left as it appeared in the printed table.

a/ Data supplied by UNICEF

b/ Data supplied by UNIDO

c/ Includes National Professional Officers. For those agencies for which data are available for 1983 and 1989, National Professional Officers numbered 321 and 743 respectively (an increase of 131 per cent).

Possible Terms of Reference for the "United Nations Representative"

As explained in the body of this report it is anticipated that the United Nations Representative would be the "depository of United Nations system policy" in the host country, as it evolves on the basis of the intergovernmental decision-making at the central level in the various organizations of the system. Considerable executive authority should be delegated to him/her, so that the Representative could play an active role in interpreting and advocating which particular variants of United Nations philosophy and practice are best suited to the specific needs of the host country. This assertive policy profile should, therefore, be accompanied by considerable executive responsibilites in shaping the different elements of the United Nations system's programme in the country.

Broadly speaking, the functions of the "United Nations Representative" could be defined as follows:

(a) To represent, including representation at the highest level, the United Nations system as a whole, including humanitarian and political affairs and other non-development activities such as human rights, disarmament, etc.

(b) To report to the Secretary-General and to advise him on potential or emerging crises - political, humanitarian, social, environmental - and on possible United Nations action to defuse them.

(c) To act as the executive arm of the Secretary-General in any political or mediation functions as requested, in the analysis and processing of early warning information and in the co-ordination of United Nations assistance in emergencies (with the full co-operation of the United Nations agencies acting as a team under the Representative's stewardship).

(d) To act as the executive arm of the Secretary-General in ensuring that United Nations development system activities in the country are conceived as parts of a single integrated country programme and implemented in a co-ordinated, coherent and rational manner and more particularly:

- to advise the government on how best to utilize the limited funds available through the various United Nations system channels for in-country development activities;

- to take all necessary steps, once the general directions and major options have been identified and agreed upon, to work out with the assistance of Headquarters missions or resident specialized advisers the framework for the major umbrella programmes in which United Nations system assistance should be concentrated, preferably in a very small number of sectors, and the modalities for implementation (e.g. national execution).

- to ensure that in the selected sectors the United Nations development philosophy and recipient government development priorities coincide so that maximum efficiency and effectiveness can be expected in programme implementation. (NB: the United Nations system intervention need not be concentrated on government top priority sectors, if the United Nations and the government are satisfied that these are adequately taken care of by the government itself (or other donors)).

- to liaise with other non-UN multilateral and bilateral programmes as well as with NGOs to ensure synergy and complementarity with the United Nations system inputs.

- to disburse funds (and to be accountable for their proper use) once he/she is satisfied that the selected programmes are viable, and to mobilize all needed intellectual (experts, consultants, etc.) and material resources, with the assistance of his/her resident advisers or technical backstopping missions from agencies, or "remote control" counselling. This should be done in a spirit of responsibility and decentralization - management by exception - with the emphasis placed on impact (and impact evaluations) rather than on monitoring and time-consuming ritualistic reporting to Headquarters.

- to authorize stop-gap small scale technical assistance activities for special, unforeseen or emergency needs that may arise.

- to enter into conventions or sub-contracting agreements with other bilateral or multilateral donors or with NGOs for the implementation of specific projects or activities.

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KEY STATEMENTS ON UNITARY FIELD REPRESENTATION

1. Position of the Secretary-General as indicated in:

(a) Foreword to the Report of the Secretary-General to the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC
(A/1992/82/Add.1, paras. 37-38)

I firmly believe that the focus of the United Nations must remain on the "field", the locations where economic, social and political decisions take effect. At the same time, for action in the field to be effective, a greater measure of coordination at this level, in support of national action, is essential.

A unified United Nations presence at the country level - a single United Nations Office - encompassing the funding programmes of the United Nations - UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA - as well as WFP and the concerned Departments in the United Nations proper, would in my view greatly enhance the effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities. By promoting a single support strategy at the country level, such a unified presence would be a rallying point for the work of the agencies and also help strengthen the necessary linkages between global strategies and country level activities. I intend to work vigorously in this direction.

(b) Addendum to Comprehensive Policy Review on Operational Activities of the United Nations System, with respect to activities in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
(A/47/419/Add.3, paras. 11-14)

In pursuance of the integrated approach, the Secretary-General, in March 1992, decided to establish integrated United Nations offices in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The first Interim Office was opened in Belarus on 8 September and the others are expected to be operational by the end of the year. (...)

The Interim Offices, which will be staffed by personnel from both UNDP and the Department of Public Information, will have one head of office, appointed by the Secretary-General with the title of United Nations Representative. Such an office will ensure that the United Nations speaks with one voice at the country level, but does not imply any rigid or limiting bureaucractic structure. Further staff from other parts of the United Nations Secretariat or from other programmes and funds may be added as circumstances warrant. In this regard, the Secretary-General has indicated that, should other departments, programmes or funds of the United Nations wish to establish a field presence in any of these countries, he would expect their representative to become part of the integrated United Nations Office. He has also informed the specialized agencies that these offices would be available to

serve those agencies which wished to make use of their administrative services. ACC has welcomed the establishment of these offices and many executive heads have indicated interest in utilizing their services. (...)

The Secretary-General is of the view that this new approach to the provision of United Nations assistance at the field level, which is in accordance with the concepts outlined by him in his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/47/1) and the foreword of his report to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on "Enhancing inter-agency cooperation for development: the role of the United Nations system" (E/1992/82 and Add. 1), responds to the concerns of Member States with respect to an integrated approach and integrated presence in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States. He also regards this unified presence as an essential part of the integrated approach to the political and socio-economic missions of the United Nations. (...)

Within the international framework of assistance for the new independent states that is emerging, the United Nations is stressing the inter-relationship between peace and security, democracy and human rights, while providing emergency and humanitarian assistance and helping to establish the conditions for long-term development.

(c) Statement to the General Assembly on the follow-up to UNCED (paras. 36-37).

Turning to the national level, I am determined to improve United Nations performance in the field. Teamwork is the key. We must move quickly to a single United Nations presence that would encompass Programmes under my direct authority, including UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDCP and WFP. This combined operation would carry out an integrated strategy in each country where the Organization operates. It would be headed by a United Nations Representative, appointed by the Secretary-General, who would also be the Resident Coordinator for the United Nations system. This would strengthen the function of the Resident Coordinator, in line with the expressed request of Member States.

We have made a start with unified representation in six countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. We have made progress with our ACC colleagues in an approach to common country strategies. These measures of integration need to be tested in practice and adapted in the light of experience. It is my hope that their success will make the case for the whole system to speak with one voice in the capitals of Member States.

2. Position of UNDP in a statement by the Administrator to the Second Committee on 26 October 1992

A coherent approach at the field level will depend largely on three things: a single, integrated UN country strategy, a unified field office and a strengthened role for the Resident Coordinator.

Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and in cooperation with the government, the UN development team - every single part of it - should prepare one integrated UN country strategy. This strategy must be based on the country's own development plan and priorities, and reflect the global mandates and advocacy of the United Nations. The UN country strategy should be supported by thematic or sectoral country programmes as needed.

The unified field office, which would carry out such a strategy, would be comprised of individual funds and programmes, including UNDCP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, the operational activities of DESD and perhaps UNHCR. Ideally, the specialized agencies would join in. The Secretary-General has already initiated this process by establishing integrated country offices in six of the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

The exact composition of the country office should be flexible, so that it can expand and contract according to the needs of individual countries. In times of conflict, the office would become a crisis management centre, giving full support to the representatives of the UN system required for any particular situation.

In times of peace, it would function as a development centre, where governments, NGOs, the donors' community and individuals can come for leadership and information. The office should focus on capacity-building efforts for sustainable human development - from the local level to the level of central government policy and planning. And it should assist the government in the mobilization, management and coordination of aid. Drawing upon the knowledge and experience of NGOs, other multilateral and bilateral donors as well as research institutes and the private sector, the office will bring a multisectoral approach, becoming a centre of excellence in human development.

The country office should be led by the UN Resident Coordinator, who reports directly to the Secretary-General. For the sake of development, and for practical reasons - like streamlined administration and cost-effectiveness - we maintain that the UNDP Resident Representative also be the UN Resident Coordinator. It goes without saying that the Reident Coordinator must be drawn from the widest pool of UN talent.

3. Position of UNICEF in a statement by the Executive-Director to the Second Committee on 26 October 1992

The new substantive opportunities at the country level must be supported by strengthened inter-agency mechanisms. Too often we set goals without such mechanisms, or we create mechanisms in a vacuum - and thereby fail to build upon proven experience and structures that are working well.

The ACC agreement on the UN Country Strategy gives the Resident Coordinator the authority to be fully involved in all projects and programmes, from the earliest stages through each major step, so as to help ensure these efforts support the overall strategy. These new arrangements apply to activities of all the organizations of the UN system, regardless of the source of funding, and cover both operational and analytical projects. This will provide an unprecedented strengthening of the Resident Coordinator role. At the same time, the new arrangements require a team approach, with the Resident Coordinator forming sub-groups focussed on specific themes and chaired by the person best suited to the task. Likewise, the Country Strategy is intended to build on the programme preparation processes and mandates of each organisation. It does not substitute for them.